

HOW DID THE IC ALLEGEDLY REMAIN UNAWARE OF A DOSSIER WIDELY SHOPPED IN DC?

Donald Trump spent yesterday and today going nuts because of the leak of the oppo research dossier. In response last night, James Clapper (who must be counting the seconds until he's out of here at this point) spoke to Trump personally, then released a statement revealing what he had said. The statement reads:

This evening, I had the opportunity to speak with President-elect Donald Trump to discuss recent media reports about our briefing last Friday. I expressed my profound dismay at the leaks that have been appearing in the press, and we both agreed that they are extremely corrosive and damaging to our national security.

We also discussed the private security company document, which was widely circulated in recent months among the media, members of Congress and Congressional staff even before the IC became aware of it. I emphasized that this document is not a U.S. Intelligence Community product and that I do not believe the leaks came from within the IC. The IC has not made any judgment that the information in this document is reliable, and we did not rely upon it in any way for our conclusions. However, part of our obligation is to ensure that policymakers are provided with the fullest possible picture of any matters that might affect national security.

President-elect Trump again affirmed his appreciation for all the men and women

serving in the Intelligence Community, and I assured him that the IC stands ready to serve his Administration and the American people.

While most have focused on the seeming confirmation that a summary of the dossier was included in Trump's briefing on Friday, I'm most interested in the claim (one I don't entirely believe) that the IC did not learn about this dossier until after the dossier "was widely circulated in recent months among the media, members of Congress and Congressional staff."

According to one public claim, the IC learned of the dossier sometime before a late October briefing to the Gang of Eight, one that led Harry Reid to complain publicly that the FBI Was sitting on explosive information.

During that period, the leader of the Democrats in the Senate, Harry Reid, wrote to the director of the FBI, accusing him of holding back "explosive information" about Mr Trump.

Mr Reid sent his letter after getting an intelligence briefing, along with other senior figures in Congress. Only eight people were present: the chairs and ranking minority members of the House and Senate intelligence committees, and the leaders of the Democratic and Republican parties in Congress, the "gang of eight" as they are sometimes called. Normally, senior staff attend "gang of eight" intelligence briefings, but not this time. The Congressional leaders were not even allowed to take notes.

According to another claim – one backed by an on-the-record statement – McCain formally told Comey about the dossier on December 9 (which is the day leakapalooza started).

But I find it really hard to believe that

Christopher Steele (the former MI6 officer who created the dossier) was shopping its contents for months without the IC asking some questions. And if it's true, it means the dossier is entirely separate from the FISA warrant first sought in June.

Not to mention the fact, ODNI seems to be disclaiming IC involvement in things that antagonize Trump right now in ways I find really unconvincing, particularly with respect to CIA.

Ah well. The Intelligence Community. Always the last to know.